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U.S.S.R.—IRAN BOUNDARY



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I. INTRODUCTION

The current USSR-Iran boundary emerged as a result of the advance of Russia into the Caucasus and Central Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries. For a short time in the early 18th century this advance carried Russia south of the Caspian Sea, but the foothold could not be maintained. Rivalries between Russia and the other great powers have enabled Iran to maintain the boundary in approximately the same position since the 1890's. Iran, alone, has not been a powerful deterring force to Russian expansion southward since the death of the powerful Iranian ruler, Nadir Shah, in 1747.

The USSR-Iran boundary west of the Caspian Sea was defined in 1828 and amended in 1893. The boundary east of the Caspian Sea was defined in 1881 and in 1893. Ambiguities in these definitions and disagreements that arose when the time came to demarcate the boundary on the ground led to at least one serious dispute concerning the location of the line. Other potential disputes have also been noted as a result of the failure on the part of the Soviet Union to adhere to the 1921 Treaty of Friendship with Iran.

In the 1921 Treaty the Soviet Union professed to embark upon a more "enlightened" policy toward Iran. Although the treaty purported to restore certain areas to Iran, its vague terms and the failure of the Soviet Government to implement it have led to further confusion and misunderstanding.

Note: This report has not been coordinated with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.

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Since the end of World War II and even well after the termination of Soviet postwar occupation of parts of Iran, there have been a number of skirmishes between Soviet and Iranian border forces. In some areas Soviet forces have followed a consistent policy of moving their posts forward into Iranian territory, thus, in effect, advancing the boundary also. A joint Iranian-Soviet commission for the settlement of boundary disputes was established and held its first meeting in November 1950. No agreements had been reported by the end of 1950.

The most important area in active dispute is along the lower Atrek River, immediately east of the Caspian Sea. West of the Caspian Sea, principally on the Moghan Steppe, are areas in which the Soviets have actually advanced their frontier posts into Iran across a boundary that had been agreed upon and demarcated. In addition, there are areas of potential dispute east of the Caspian Sea, in the central mountainous section of the USSR-Iran boundary and along the Harī Rūd.

US officials have been hampered in making a proper evaluation of conflicting claims by lack of firsthand knowledge of the areas in question. Accounts of incidents along the Atrek River immediately east of Gasan-Kuli Bay, in particular, have been based on out-of-date maps. At the time the incidents occurred, Iranian border forces in this area may have lacked adequate knowledge of: (1) the location of the boundary¹ and (2) the relative positions of places.

1. Reference is made here to the boundary shown on Soviet maps. Throughout the report and on the accompanying maps the terms "international boundary" and "boundary" mean the boundary according to the Soviet version, since it is the actual operating boundary in most areas. Where allusion is made to the boundary claimed by the Iranians, this fact is indicated.

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In this report the agreements that form the legal basis for the boundary are discussed from the point of view of boundary history, and factors to be considered in evaluating the more important conflicting claims are presented. All available primary source maps relevant to the USSR-Iran boundary are analyzed on the basis of accuracy of portrayal of boundary data, with special emphasis on disputed areas. The present report incorporates the results of this research analysis. Questions of sovereignty and fishing rights in the Caspian Sea and water rights on rivers flowing along or across the boundary are not considered.

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II. HISTORY OF THE BOUNDARYA. West of the Caspian Sea

The present USSR-Iran boundary west of the Caspian Sea had its inception in the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813. By the terms of the treaty Russia expanded across the Caucasus Mountains. Iran ceased to be a major power in the Caucasus area. The complete definition of the boundary line, however, came with the next Russian advance southward and is embodied in the Treaty of Turkmanchai of 1828.¹ This treaty gave the Russians the provinces of Erivan (Yerevan) and Nakhichevan and described the frontier from Turkey (the Ottoman States) eastward to Iranian Āstārā on the Caspian Sea. The boundary established has remained in effect since 1828, except in the Abbāsābād district.

The boundary was demarcated shortly after the Treaty of Turkmanchai was negotiated. An Englishman on the boundary commission, Lieutenant-Colonel W. Montieth, described his field maps so completely that the descriptions serve to a great degree in lieu of the demarcation maps, which are unavailable.²

In 1893 a convention between Russia and Iran dealing mainly with the area east of the Caspian also restored to Iran the land along the right

1. Treaty of Peace between Russia and Persia signed at Turkmanchai 10 February 1828. British and Foreign State Papers, 1827-1828, Vol. XV, London, 1829, pp. 669-675.

2. W. Montieth, Notes on Georgia and the New Russian Conquests beyond the Caucasus, Part II, "Description of the frontier of Russia and Persia as settled by the Commissioners in the years 1828 and 1829," pp. 29-40 (no place or date of publication given).

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bank of the Aras River opposite the former fortifications of Abbasabad;¹ this land had been ceded to Russia by Article IV of the Treaty of Turkmanchai.

B. East of the Caspian Sea

The USSR-Iran boundary from the Caspian Sea eastward to the Afghan frontier is the result of three basic agreements between Russia and Iran during the period from 1869 to 1893.

In 1869 the Russians recognized Iranian sovereignty up to the banks of the Atrek River.² The boundary along the lower course of the Atrek just east of Gasan-Kuli Bay, however, has never been demarcated to the satisfaction of both parties.

The Akhal-Khorassan Convention in 1881 described the boundary east of the Caspian Sea from Gasan-Kuli Bay to the "oasis at the road from Gavers (Gyaurs) to Lutfābād, leaving the fortress of Baba Durmaz to the east."³

1. Convention between Russia and Persia for Territorial interchange, signed at Teheran 27 May-8 June 1893. British and Foreign State Papers, 1893-1894, Vol. LXXXVI, London, 1899, pp. 1246-1249. Article III, p. 1247, described the new frontier in the Abbāsābād district, west of the Caspian Sea.

2. Agreement between Russia and Persia, recognizing the Atrek River as the boundary, 13 December 1869. Treaties &c. concluded between Great Britain and Persia, and between Persia and Other Foreign Powers, wholly or partially in force on the 1st April 1891, London, 1891, pp. 133-134. This boundary agreement covered an area extending inland to the end of the Gurgan district only, a distance of approximately 30 miles.

3. Convention between Persia and Russia of 9-21 December 1881, defining the boundary between the two countries east of the Caspian Sea (Akhal-Khorassan Boundary). Treaties &c ... in force on the 1st April 1891: Article I, pp. 137-138. Article II provided for "Special Commissioners" to trace the boundary defined by Article I. According to Article III, Persia evacuated the forts of Giamab and Kulkulab, which lay north of the line described in Article I.

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From this rather indefinite point to the frontier of Afghanistan the boundary is described by Article V of the Convention of 1893.¹ In addition, by the Convention of 1893 Iran gave to Russia "the village of Firuzé and the entire district between the frontier line established in 1881 and the line extending from the Kenare Mountains to the summit of the Bir Range." In return, Iran received confirmation of its possession of the village of Hisār Qal'eh (Hissar).² Article V provided for the appointment of commissioners to trace the frontier (1) from Baba Durmaz eastward to the Afghanistan frontier and (2) in the districts of Firuze and Hissar.

Most of the boundary defined in 1881 was demarcated about 1886. A protocol dealing with the boundary from Baba Durmaz to Gasan-Kuli Bay is said to have been signed on 10 February 1886, and maps of the border region at the scale 1:84,000 were prepared. An additional agreement and another protocol regarding the boundary along the lower Atrek were negotiated, but the boundary in this area continued to be in dispute. The Convention of 1893 was followed by protocols of 23 January 1894, 8 November 1894, and 9 November 1894,³ which presumably dealt with the demarcation of the boundary from Baba Durmaz to the Afghan frontier and in the areas west of Baba Durmaz that were ceded to Russia. Copies of these boundary protocols and maps are not available in Washington.

1. Convention between Russia and Persia for Territorial interchange, signed at Teheran 27 May-8 June 1893. British and Foreign State Papers, 1893-1894, Vol. LXXXVI, London, 1899, pp. 1246-1249.

2. The Hissar in question is shown as Hisar Qal'eh on Sheet J40R. Muhammadabad, of the September 1942 edition of the 1:253,440, British Geographical Section, General Staff, series (GSGS 3919).

3. Mohammed Ali Mokhbar, The Frontier of Iran (in Persian), Teheran, 1945, p. 16.

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In 1921, following the rise of the Soviets, a new treaty was concluded between Iran and the Socialist Republic.¹ In this Treaty the Soviets disavowed the "policy of oppression" toward Iran followed by the former "imperialistic" Tsarist Government and declared that

...all treaties, agreements and conventions signed between the Tsarist Government of Russia and Persia, by which the former impaired the rights of the people of Persia, are hereby cancelled and declared null and void.²

This declaration of general policy was followed in Article III by territorial provisions. The article provided that

The High Contracting Parties agree to recognize and accept the Russian-Persian frontier according to the decisions of the Frontier Commission of 1881....[The] Soviet Government... abandons its interest in the island of Ashouradeh and other islands situated along the coast of the Persian province of Astrabad. It also returns to Persia the village of Firouzeh [Firuze], together with the lands adjoining it, which were transferred to Russia in accordance with the Agreement of May 20, 1893.

The Persian Government, on its part, consents to the town of Sarakhs, known as Russian Sarakhs or Old Sarakhs [Serakhs], together with the lands adjoining it, which lie along the Sarakhs River, remaining in the possession of Russia.³

Before the treaty was ratified by the Iranian Government, an exchange of notes took place between the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Soviet Diplomatic Representative in Teheran. The Iranian official

1. Treaty of Friendship, 26 February 1921. Soviet Treaty Series, Vol. I, 1917-1928, Washington, D.C., 1950, pp. 92-98.

2. Soviet Treaty Series, Vol. I, p. 93.

3. Soviet Treaty Series, Vol. I, p. 93.

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requested clarification of certain articles of the treaty which, according to him, were "worded vaguely" and asked that the "error which has been made in Article III, in which the word 'Commission' was written instead of 'Treaty,'" should be corrected. According to the Iranian Foreign Minister, the only treaty concluded in 1881 was the frontier delimitation treaty referred to in Article III. In reply, the Soviet representative referred to the "small error to which you draw attention in Article III with reference to the Convention of 1881" and gave some general assurances that he personally would be willing to promote negotiations for a total or partial revision of all the articles in question "as far as the interests of Russia permit."¹ The treaty, according to its own provisions, was to become effective upon being signed at Moscow, 26 February 1921, but ratification was delayed. The two governments did not actually exchange ratifications until 26 February 1922.

Apparently the questionable articles were never revised. Firuzé and its adjacent area were not ceded to Iran, nor did the Soviet Union consent to make any other boundary adjustments in favor of Iran. The Soviets, however, retained control of Russian Sarakhs. (See map CIA 11657.)

The Treaty of 1921 made provision for a mixed commission of Russians and Iranians to decide on territorial questions in dispute. In 1922 a mixed commission was set up to study the boundary question. Soviet

1. Exchange of Notes Relative to Articles III, V, VI, XIII and XX of the Treaty of Friendship Signed at Moscow, February 26, 1921. The Iranian /Persian/ note dated Teheran, 12 December 1921 was signed by "Mocharos-Saltaneh, Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs." The Soviet note dated Teheran, 12 December 1921 was signed by "Rotstein /Rothstein/, Diplomatic Representative of R.S.F.S.R.", Soviet Treaty Series, Vol. I, p. 150.



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objections regarding matters which were considered indisputable by the
Iranians were so numerous that the Iranian mission returned to Teheran
after 11 months in the field without reaching any agreements.¹

1. Mokhbar, The Frontier of Iran, p. 17.

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III. DESCRIPTION OF THE BOUNDARY AREAA. West of the Caspian Sea

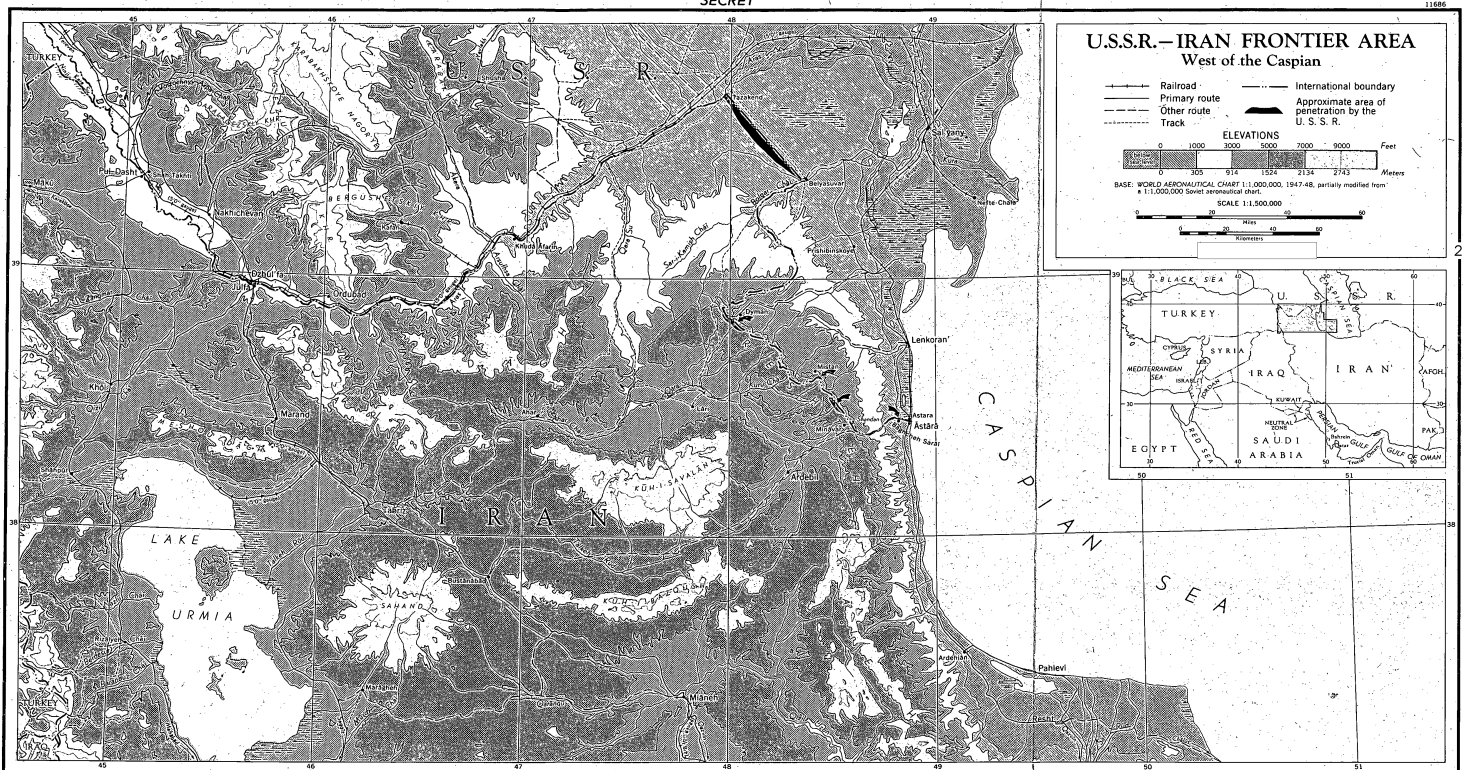
The topography along the boundary west of the Caspian Sea is shown on the accompanying map (CIA 11686). With the exception of the boundary in the northeastern part of the Moghan Steppe area, the line follows river courses and divides between drainage basins, usually through mountainous country, throughout most of its length.

In the northwest the USSR-Iran boundary begins at the meeting of the stream Ninji Kara Su with the Aras River. Eastward from this point the boundary follows the roughly parabola-shaped course of the Aras River to the vicinity of Tazakend on the Moghan Steppe. In general, the demarcation gave islands in the Aras River to the nation to which the islands were the closer. On available maps, however, there is no positive evidence that indicates sovereignty over islands in the river, though it was established at the time of demarcation.

The valley of the Aras River varies in width where it separates the mountain systems of the Nakhichevan, Armenian, the Azerbaijan SSR's from the Iranian Province of Azerbāijān. The northwestern sector of the basin is wider than the central part. Approximately 15 miles west of Julfā the valley narrows sharply and becomes entrenched between the mountains for a distance of over 10 miles. Between Julfā and the vicinity of Khudā Āfarīn the valley is generally narrow. In this section the valley is dominated by the Qara Dāgh massif on the Iranian side and the Zangezurskiy

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Khrebet, and associated ranges on the Soviet side. In the 30-mile stretch between Khudā Āfarīn and the point where the Qara Su joins the Aras the basin gradually widens. Beyond the junction the river cuts northeastward through the widening Moghan Steppe to the vicinity of Tazakend.

From a point slightly northeast of Tazakend the boundary follows a straight southeasterly line for approximately 31 miles across the Moghan Steppe to a point just west of the Azerbaijan SSR town of Belyasuvar on the stream Bolgar Chāī. This is the area in which the Soviet forces have made the largest continuous incursion across the Iranian frontier. (See map CIA 11686.)

Beyond Belyasuvar the boundary extends in a generally southward direction up the S-shaped curve of the Bolgar Chāī to its headwaters. From here it follows the crest of the Reshteh-E-Tālesh hills, continues southwestward, then turns southeastward along the divide between the basin of the Qara Su and small streams flowing into the Caspian until it reaches the Āstārā River, which it follows to the Caspian Sea.

Some Kurdish groups are found in the extreme northwestern part of the boundary area. The people of the rest of the Aras Basin, however, are primarily Azeri-speaking Turks, who are concentrated in scattered villages or groups of villages. Julfā, Mākū, Khoī, and Marand, in reality, are large aggregations of several villages surrounded by fields. With the exception of Julfā, these settlements are market towns for the crops of neighboring oases, which produce opium, tobacco, cereals, dried fruit, and cotton. East of the Aras Basin are the nomadic tribes of the Moghan Steppe and scattered hill people of the Reshteh-E-Tālesh area.

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Three important motor routes cross the USSR-Iran boundary west of the Caspian Sea (see maps CIA 11686 and 11692) -- at Āstārā, Julfā, and Pul Dasht.

On the Iranian side of the boundary the Āstārā crossing leads to

- (1) The Fulfā - Tabriz - Teheran road via either (a) the Āstārā - Ardebīl - Bustānābād route or (b) the Ardebīl - Ahar - Tabriz route;
- (2) The capital, Teheran, via (a) the Āstārā - Resht - Qazvīn route or (b) the Āstārā - Resht - Chālūs route;
- (3) Roads leading southward to the Persian Gulf, Damascus, and Baghdad via (a) Teheran or (b) Qazvīn.

On the Soviet side the Āstārā crossing leads to Baku, at which point primary routes radiate out into the Caucasus (see map CIA 11692).

The crossing at Iranian Julfā ranks with the Āstārā crossing in importance. Julfā connects by one primary route to Teheran via Tabriz, and by another primary route to Khōī, from which point a primary route leads to the Turkish frontier. On the Soviet side, Dzhul'fa is connected with the Soviet road network leading to Tiflis and the Black Sea (see map CIA 11692).

Pul Dasht is the motor crossing closest to the Turkish frontier. The route from Pul Dasht connects with the primary route that intersects the Mākū-Khōī primary route approximately 8 miles southeast of Mākū, from which point another primary route leads into Turkey.

On the USSR side of the boundary the broad-gauge (5-foot) Transcaucasus railway roughly parallels the Aras River. This part of the railway connects



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with (1) Tiflis via Yerevan (Erivan) and (2) Baku, all of which connect with the Ukrainian rail net. A branch also leads southward from Baku, ending approximately 3 miles north of the Soviet town of Astara.

Although a twin-arched steel railroad bridge at Julfā crosses the Aras River into Iran, there is at present no exchange of railroad cars between countries. The bridge is approximately 500 meters upstream from the motor bridge and is the only rail crossing along the entire USSR-Iran frontier either east or west of the Caspian Sea.

The railway on the Iranian side of the boundary extends from Julfā southward 92 miles to Tabriz. This section of the line is broad-gauge (5-foot), like the Soviet Transcaucasus line. The Julfā-Tabriz line is reportedly being considered for conversion to standard gauge (4 feet 8½ inches), in conjunction with the program for linking Tabriz to Mīāneh, which is the present railhead for the standard-gauge line running west from Teheran. From Teheran the line runs southward to the Persian Gulf at Khurramshahr and Bandar-e-Shāhpūr.

B. East of the Caspian Sea

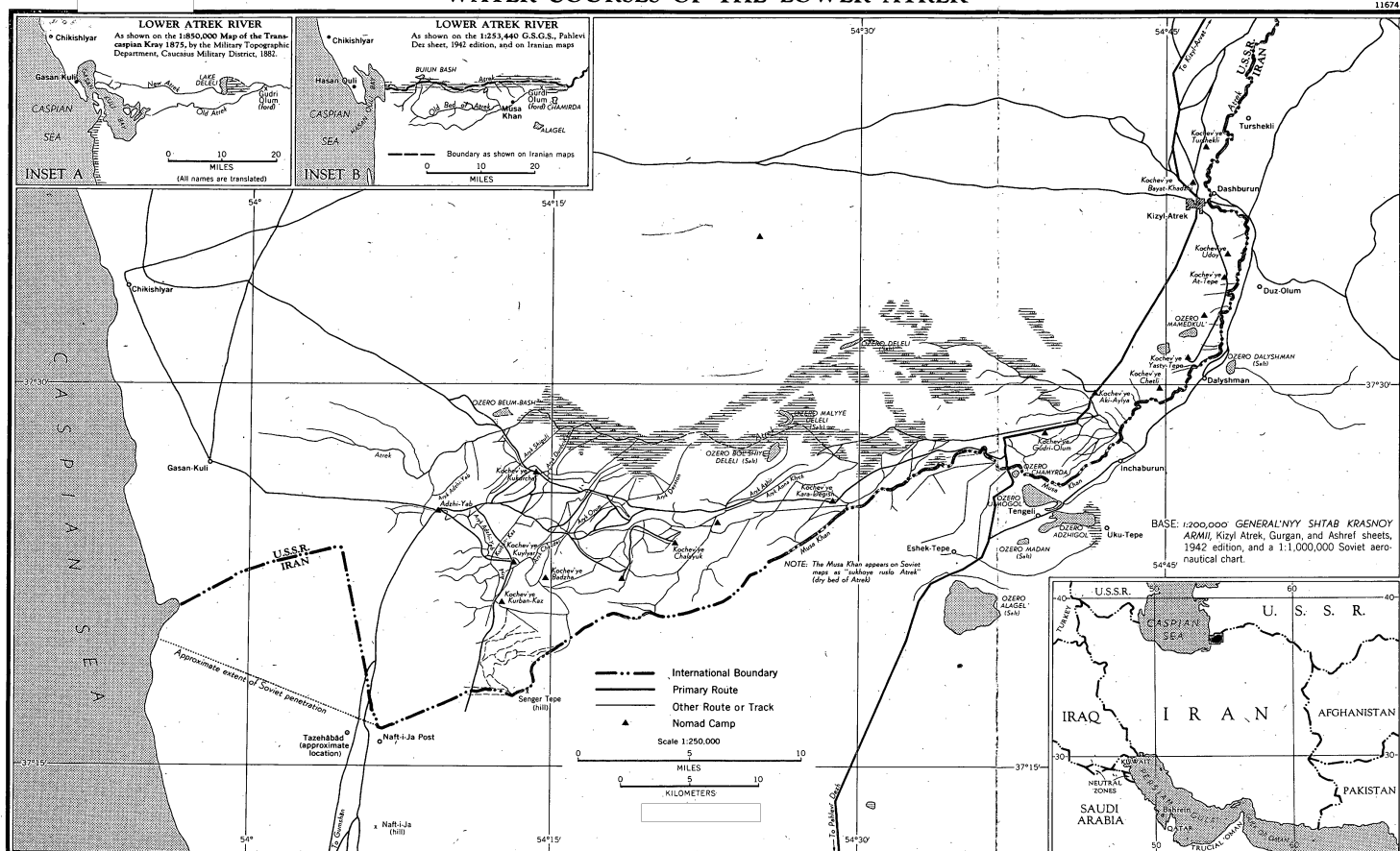
The USSR-Iran boundary area east of the Caspian Sea includes a mountainous area in the middle, with lowland valleys at either end -- that of the Atrek near the Caspian on the west and that of the Harī Rūd (Tedzhen) on the east. The Soviet Union is in possession of nearly all of the great Central Asian lowland, and the principal Central Asian route from Krasnovodsk via Ashkhabad and Mary (Merv) to the east lies entirely within Soviet territory (see map CIA 11692).

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The boundary begins on the Caspian Sea and proceeds across a partially reclaimed lowland to a point near longitude $54^{\circ}10'E$. At this point the line dips southeasterly along the approximate axis of the old channel of Gasan-Kuli Bay to approximately latitude $37^{\circ}17'N$. Thence the boundary runs northeasterly to the approximate position of latitude $37^{\circ}24'N$ longitude $54^{\circ}30'E$, where it joins a channel called the sukhoye ruslo Atrek (dry river bed Atrek) by the Soviets and the Musa Khan by the Iranians (see map CIA 11674).

The dry river bed Atrek continues to form the boundary until it reaches the relatively permanent channel of the Atrek slightly north of the Iranian town of Inchaburun. Beyond this the boundary follows the Atrek, which winds northward and northeastward through the lowland to Chat-i-Atrek (see map CIA 11657).

Most of the central section of the frontier area lies within the Kopet Dag mountain system and associated ranges. At Chat-i-Atrek the boundary turns northeasterly, and, between the neck of land separating the Atrek and Sumbar Rivers, follows the ridges of the Songu Dag and Syagirim Dag eastward to approximately $38^{\circ}05'N$ - longitude $56^{\circ}19'E$. From this point the boundary runs northward to the Chandir River, thence turns northeast across the mountains and east across the ridge separating the Chandir and Sumbar Rivers to the Sumbar River. Beyond this point it follows the Sumbar approximately to the intersection of the river with the meridian of $57^{\circ}E$. There the boundary begins a northward curve to a point a few minutes north of latitude $38^{\circ}15'N$, including a



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part of the extreme upper watershed of the Sumbar River within Iran. At approximately longitude $57^{\circ}15'E$ the boundary begins a southeasterly course and continues along a ridge of the Kopet Dag system, the Tapparov, to a point a few minutes south of latitude $38^{\circ}N$ and a few minutes east of longitude $57^{\circ}15'E$. Here the boundary begins a more easterly and southerly course along another crest of the Kopet Dag system, the Masinev. The boundary then continues to the southeast, crosses the stream Firuzanin Su, and turns more sharply southeast at approximately longitude $37^{\circ}45'E$ - latitude $58^{\circ}10'N$. From this point the boundary continues south to approximately latitude $37^{\circ}40'N$ - longitude $58^{\circ}12'E$, where the line again swings in an irregular eastward course, emerging from the mountains west of Lutfābād.

The boundary skirts Lutfābād on the north before turning south again. The line passes to the east of Hisār Qal'eh (Hissar in the 1893 convention) and continues south to the stream Zangenanli Chāī, where it turns south-eastward through the mountains to the Chechehen River. From this point the boundary runs due east to the Harī Rūd (Tedzhen River) north of Iranian Sarakhs and follows the Harī Rūd to the Afghan frontier just north of Zulfiqār.

The people of the immediate boundary area are neither ethnically nor linguistically unified. In general, the Turkoman people of the lower Atrek River area and the western part of the highlands along the border speak a form of Azeri sometimes called Jaghatai. Racially and linguistically, they are more akin to groups in Central Asia than to the Turkic elements in Persian Azerbāijān. Eastward the highlands border area has Turkoman,

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Iranian, and a few Kurdish and Hazara ethnic groups. In the lower mountain border areas that merge with the Harī Rūd Valley, Persian is the chief language spoken in an area containing Afghan Hazara, Turkoman, and Iranian groups.

The route crossings between the USSR and Iran east of the Caspian Sea, classified on the basis of importance, are shown on the accompanying map (CIA 11692). Motorable routes cross or connect with the frontier at four places -- west of Inchaburun,¹ and at Bājgīrān, Lutfābād, and Sarakhs. Of these four, the one on the sukhoie ruslo Atrek (dry river bed Atrek) immediately north of Tengeli provides the shortest approach to Gurgān and Teherān. In the USSR this route continues to Kizyl-Arvat on the Turk-Sib railway.

Farther eastward there is an entrance from the USSR into Iran at the Bājgīrān frontier post. This route connects the Soviet town of Ashkhabad with the Iranian town of Qūchān and forms a principal link between the Krasnovodsk-Ashkhabad-Mary (Merv) route in the USSR and the Teheran-Qūchān-Meshed route in Iran. The route through Lutfābād extends westward to the intersection with the Ashkhabad-Bājgīrān-Qūchān road north of Qūchān.

Farther eastward a route from Iranian Sarakhs on the Harī-Rūd extends into the interior to Meshed, the key road center of extreme north-eastern Iran. Routes from Meshed lead ultimately to both the Afghanistan

1. A wooden bridge across the lower Atrek south of Lake Beum-Bash is sometimes mentioned in connection with the boundary dispute. It is on a track leading southeastward from near Chikishlyar, but this route seems to be of little importance at present.

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and Pakistan frontiers. From Russian Sarakhs there is a road connection with Tedzhen on the Ashkhabad-Mary route to Samarkand.

No rail lines crosses the USSR-Iran frontier east of the Caspian Sea. The nearest rail line to the boundary is the Soviet Turk-Sib railroad, a broad-gauge (5-foot) line. At Lutfābād, this line passes very close to the boundary. An Iranian rail line extends from Teheran to Shāhrūd and is projected eastward to Meshed.

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IV. BOUNDARY DISPUTES AND POTENTIAL DISPUTESA. Soviet Encroachment West of the Caspian Sea

The USSR-Iran boundary west of the Caspian Sea was defined in 1828 and partially modified in 1893. The boundary has been officially demarcated except for a small area around Shandan rock where it is merely defined. During the period from 1948 to 1950 the Soviets have been noticeably violating the demarcated boundary. The accompanying map, entitled U.S.S.R. - Iran Frontier Area West of the Caspian (CIA 11686), shows the extent of Soviet encroachment.

1. Status of the Boundary

The most continuous incursion has taken place on the Moghan Steppe between Tazakend and Belyasuvar. In this area the Soviets have intimidated the nomadic Shahsaven families, who consequently camp several miles back from the border.¹ When these families migrate southward to summer quarters in the latter part of April, the Soviets move into the semipermanent evacuated encampments and often construct dugouts. A new frontier is then marked out by the Soviets by plowing a new border furrow. When the Shahsaven families return in the winter, they again settle several miles back from the boundary to avoid contact with the Soviets. Upon a new seasonal migration, this process is repeated, and Soviet penetration progressively obliterates the old frontiers. The Soviets are also

1. The Shahsavens are credited by the Iranian army as having assisted the the Iranian Government in fighting against the Soviet-sponsored regime in Iranian Azerbāijān in 1946.

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contributing to the obliteration of the established boundary at Tazakend by opposing any Iranian attempt to construct a weir on the Aras River to retard the river from eroding away the site. Since Tazakend serves as an anchor site for the boundary in the area, its disappearance would be of material assistance to the Soviets in a further advance into Iranian territory.

Smaller areas of Soviet encroachment are located south of the Moghan Steppe near the Soviet sites of Dyman and Mistan and the Iranian sites of Mināvar and Baghcheh Sarāī (see map CIA 11686).

Research on the problem of the location of the legal boundary has brought to light what appears to be an earlier Russian violation of the boundary. The description of the boundary by Commissioner Montieth has clarified the position of the boundary on Shandan Height. He states that

The commissioners having disputed regarding which branch of the Astara River was mentioned in the Treaty as forming the Frontier. It was agreed that the lesser range on which stands the rock of Shindan [Shandan], and divides the middle from the Northern branch of the Astara River should constitute the boundary. Thus rendering unavailable for either party the strong position of Shindan.¹

The 1941 edition of the 1:200,000 and the 1939 edition of the 1:100,000 Astara sheets of the General'nyy Shtab Krasnoy Armii (General Staff Red Army) map series however follow the earlier Russian precedent of including Shandan within what is now the USSR. All sheets of the maps of the British Geographical Section, General Staff, of the same area at 1:210,000 and 1:253,440 also follow earlier official Russian sources in depicting the boundary. All subsequent compilations have continued to show only the

1. Montieth, Notes on Georgia..., Part II, footnote p. 40.

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Russian boundary claim in the Shandan area.¹ The explanation to the Shandan encroachment may have its basis in the terrain of the area, which overwhelmed the boundary commissioners. Montieth states:

The last part of the Frontier can hardly be said to be defined nor was it practicable on account of the thick jungle, and rocky ridge on which the Shindan stands, to follow the ridge to the junction with the Astara ravine which then marks the frontier to the Sea.²

The Shandan area is the only place in which the boundary commissioners divided the dominating height between the two countries but did not demarcate the boundary on account of rugged terrain. Here the Russians have merely proceeded to attach the territory to their country (see map CIA 11686).

2. Maps Illustrating the Boundary Problem

The demarcation on the Moghan Steppe followed the broad provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of 1828. A pyramid was built near the point of boundary departure from the Aras River; the line then ran ...in a right line through the plain of Magan in a direction of S32 $\frac{1}{2}$ E to another pyramid erected near Billasewar, on the Balarood river, a distance of 45 versts; the intermediate space being traced by a line of pyramids (or stone circles) of six feet high³ [sic].

1. Original Sheet 1, of the 1:1,013,760 Map of Persia compiled by the British Intelligence Division, War Office, 1886, with 1891 revisions from material supplied by the Surveyor General of India, shows the boundary bisecting Shandan (Shindan on this map.)

2. Montieth, Notes on Georgia..., Part II, p. 40.

3. Montieth, Notes on Georgia..., Part II, p. 38.

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Unfortunately, no demarcation maps are available. One Russian map appears to be the basis of most boundary representations on the Moghan Steppe between Tazakend and Belyasuvar -- the 1910 revision of the 1898 edition of Sheet Z9 of the 1:210,000, or 5-verst, series. The map agrees with the treaty and the subsequent demarcation of the boundary on the Moghan Steppe. All British 1:253,440 (Quarter-Inch Series) sheets entitled Prishibinskoe use this official Russian source.

An incorrect representation of the boundary on the Moghan Steppe is shown on Sheet J-39-13, Belyasuvar, of the 1:100,000 General'nyy Shtab Rabotche Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya (General Staff Red Army of Workers and Peasants) map, 1938 edition. This map does not agree with either the treaty definition or the demarcation of the boundary. Soviet border forces using the map would be unable to identify in its entirety the accepted boundary on the Moghan Steppe.

The situation with respect to boundary information for the Moghan Steppe is equally serious for Iranian border forces. No boundary between the USSR and Iran is shown on either the Iranian 1:50,000 or the 1:253,440 maps covering the Moghan Steppe. Iranian forces, consequently, cannot adequately define the extent of Soviet encroachment from these maps. The following Iranian sheets cover the Moghan Steppe:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Sheet No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
1:50,000	8	Vank
1:50,000	5	Moghan
1:50,000	9	Moghan
1:50,000	10	Moghan
1:253,440	8A	Moghan

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The Soviet encroachment is especially serious because it crosses a demarcated border. An analysis of available material discloses no basis for such advance. Regardless of the depth of the encroachment upon Iranian territory, the fact remains that the boundary is poorly demarcated at present. Stone pyramids 6 feet high, erected well over 100 years ago, can hardly constitute good demarcation points today. Fixed points, based on a mutually accepted datum, should be determined for the stretch of boundary between Tazakend and Belyasuvar.

A recently received map¹ with accompanying notes provides some information hitherto unknown and reveals some Iranian misconceptions concerning the boundary on the Moghan Steppe and Reshteh-E-Tālesh.

The map contributes the following: (1) information on the extent and location of Soviet penetration of Iran, (2) information on border landmarks and Iranian methods of measuring distances between them, (3) fairly detailed marginal notes outlining the Iranian claim, (4) evidence of Iranian awareness of specific conditions in the Astara River, and (5) verification of Iranian claims to Shandan Height.

Misconceptions on the map and its marginal notes include: (1) the precise angle of the boundary over the Moghan Steppe; (2) the attribution to the Turkman Chai Treaty of 1828 of terrain features that are not contained in that treaty; and (3) a treatment unfavorable to Iran of some features of the boundary demarcation that were actually favorable.

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B. Disputes and Potential Disputes East of the Caspian Sea1. Lower Atrek River Area

a. Boundary Problem -- According to the Convention of 1881, the westernmost portion of the USSR-Iran boundary line near the Caspian was fixed as follows: "Beginning at the Hasan Kuli [Gasani-Kuli] Gulf, the course of the river Atrek serves as the frontier as far as Chat [Chat-i-Atrek]."¹ This portion of the boundary has been in dispute ever since the signing of the 1881 Convention because the lower Atrek River proved to be inadequate as a boundary reference line.

The Atrek, rising in the Kopet Dag, flows westward through the plateau and then across the trans-Caspian plain to a point north of the Iranian town of Inchaburun, some 50 to 60 miles below Chat-i-Atrek. The stretch of the river between Chat and Inchaburun serves fairly well as a boundary because the Atrek flows in a single channel through an entrenched valley. From the general vicinity of Inchaburun to the Caspian, a distance of about 40 miles, the waters of the Atrek divide into a number of channels (see map CIA 11674). The northern, or principal, channel extends almost directly west from the neighborhood of Inchaburun. It is bordered on either side by marshy land, and in places the banks of the stream merge imperceptibly with the surrounding marsh.

During the course of time the main channel of the lower Atrek has changed its position considerably. At one time it reportedly flowed into the Caspian Sea or Gasan-Kuli Bay north of its present course. At a later

1. British and Foreign State Papers, 1881-1882, Vol. LXXIII, London, 1889, p. 98.

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date it seems to have run south of the present course, emptying into what was then the southern part of the Gasan-Kuli Bay. From the 1870's to the present, however, the river bed has apparently remained in approximately the same position. Practically all Russian and British maps published during this period are in agreement in placing the principal channel in about the position it now occupies.

The main channel forms the northern side of a roughly triangular area having its apex at Inchaburun and its base along the Caspian. The other side of the triangle is formed by the boundary between Iran and the USSR. The boundary extends along a channel of the Atrek that diverges from the main channel near Inchaburun and trends southwestwardly, ending somewhat less than halfway between Inchaburun and the coast. The channel is referred to on some Russian maps as the sukhoye ruslo Atrek or "dry river bed Atrek" and appears to be identical with the channel called the Musa Khan by the Iranians. From the point where this dry or intermittent channel ends the boundary continues southwestwardly over dry land, turns sharply northward, and finally westward to the Caspian (see map CIA 11674). The Musa Khan channel probably carried more water at one time than it does at present and probably ran into the southern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay along or near the line of the present boundary. Another channel or series of inter-connecting channels, and midway between the main Atrek and the boundary extending from near the Musa Khan westward toward the Caspian, is identified on the British Quarter-Inch Map as the "Old bed of Atrek River." At one time this channel probably connected with the Musa Khan near the

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nomad camp named Musa Khan (see map CIA 11674, Inset B).. In naming this channel "Old bed of Atrek River," British cartographers probably meant to represent the stream termed "Old Atrek" on earlier Russian maps.. More recent and more detailed Russian maps show an intricate network of small waterways in the space between the main Atrek and the boundary and do not identify any of them as the "Old Atrek". It is significant that the so-called "Old Atrek" is not represented by the British as the channel that carries the boundary; the boundary channel, the Musa Khan, diverges from the Old Atrek in the vicinity of Kara-Degish and continues to the southwest.

In the 1870's and 1880's, Gasan-Kuli Bay was a shallow, lagoon-like expanse of water 18 miles long, more or less, that extended in a north-south direction roughly parallel to the main body of the Caspian and connected with it by a narrow strait. The bay was narrower in the middle than at either end and was thus divided into a northern and a southern basin. The main channel of the Atrek flowed into the northern basin. The Old Atrek and the Musa Khan, assuming that there were identifiable channels by those names, flowed into or toward the southern basin (see map CIA 11674, inset A). Since the 1880's, Gasan-Kuli Bay has gradually contracted in area because of the lowering of the water level of the Caspian and probably siltation from the Atrek. The southern basin had definitely disappeared by 1921, as shown on map CIA 11674, inset B. In the late 1920's, or early 1930's a vestige of the northern basin still remained, its northeastern limit being approximately latitude 37°26'N and longitude 54°02'E.

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At present the bay has disappeared entirely except for a small indentation in the Caspian coast line -- the place where the effective boundary ends. Salt flats or salt marsh cover much of the area formerly occupied by the bay. Most of the channels of the Atrek seem to end at about the position of the eastern shore line of Gasan-Kuli Bay of the 1870's. According to recent Soviet maps, the main channel appears to be connected with the sea by a canal (not shown on the accompanying map because of insufficient data). An Iranian source,¹ on the other hand, claims that the main channel enters the Caspian north of the vestigial Gasan-Kuli Bay and the village of the same name.

The flow of the Atrek varies considerably from season to season. During the wet season of spring and early summer the waterways are flooded, and the main channel widens to a corridor of about three and one-half miles. At this season, surface water probably reaches the Caspian from the different channels, even though the definable channels themselves do not extend to the sea. During the dry season, Atrek water that is not diverted for irrigation upstream is dissipated in the marshes, and very little, if any, reaches the Caspian as surface drainage. Probably the main channel is no larger at this season than many of the other interlacing channels. Even in 1880 the dry season flow of water into Gasan-Kuli Bay was small. A British traveler about that time had difficulty in finding a main channel

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of the Atrek, but he was told that in the wet season the Atrek carried a large volume of water to the bay.¹

The area of the lower Atrek is inhabited by Turkomans. Its agricultural resources appear to be negligible. Near Chikishlyar, immediately northwest of the area, is a potential oil field. Surface indications of oil have been mentioned in field reports as occurring at Naft-i-Ja (Place of Oil), but it is not absolutely certain whether the oil indications are at Naft-i-Jah Post on the boundary or at Naft-i-Jah Hill south of the boundary.

Article II of the Convention of 1881 stipulated that commissioners were to be appointed by Iran and Russia to trace the boundary on the ground and erect boundary markers. According to Iranian sources,² the following events took place after the signing of the 1881 Convention. A canal from Banda Tepe, west of Inhaburun, to Senger Tepe was dug either by the Russians or by the native Turkomans under Russian direction. Water diverted into this canal formed the channel of Musa Khan, named after a nomad camp on its banks. About 1884, boundary commissioners were sent to the field by each country to demarcate the line in the region of the lower Atrek.

1. Edmond O'Donovan, The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian During the Years 1879-80-81, 2 Vols., London, 1882, Vol. 1, pp. 116-121. The map accompanying the work shows the main Atrek as emptying into the northern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay. An evaluation of O'Donovan's accounts of his journeys along the lower Atrek River in 1879 has revealed his mistaken notion that he crossed the main channel of the Atrek River. Actually, in his crossing he mistook the southern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay for the Atrek.

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The Iranian representative, Soleiman Khan, proposed that before the demarcation took place, the courses of the Atrek and the Musa Khan should be examined and that the boundary should be placed along the main channel of the Atrek. The Russian representative, Colonel Karpoff, stated that he had been instructed by his government to designate the Musa Khan as the "Atrek" and to place the boundary along it. He admitted that the real Atrek was the one so designated by the Iranians. The work of the commissioners was suspended because of this failure to agree.

On 28 November 1885 a new agreement was signed fixing the boundary along the Musa Khan rather than the main channel of the Atrek. This agreement was signed by the Iranian Foreign Minister and the Russian Ambassador in Teheran. It was negotiated under Russian pressure and apparently was not approved or ratified by the Iranian Government. The Iranian Government now claims that the Foreign Minister had no authority to sign the agreement. Nevertheless, demarcation commissioners were sent into the field and placed boundary markers along the Musa Khan. A protocol of demarcation was signed by representatives of the two countries on 6 March 1886 establishing the boundary along the course of the Musa Khan from Banda Tepe to Gasan-Kuli Bay.

It is fairly certain that the diversion of water into the Musa Khan did not cause any major shift in the main and secondary channels of the lower Atrek. The Tsarist Government may have been serious in the claim advanced through Colonel Karpoff that the Musa Khan should be termed the "Atrek," but if so, many Russian cartographers, official and unofficial, remained unaware of this fact. Russian maps, with two exceptions, continued

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to show the northern main channel as the true Atrek. The chief exception was Sheet 18 of the 1:1,680,000 Map of the Southern Bordering Strip of Asiatic Russia, an official map published in 1892, which represented the Atrek as flowing into the southern end of Gasan-Kuli Bay. The 1921 edition of this map, however, indicated that the southern end of the bay had disappeared and that the "River Atrek" had become the "dry river bed Atrek." Soviet maps continue to indicate the Musa Khan channel as the "dry river bed Atrek," and they show the main northern channel as the Atrek.

The Treaty of 1921 made no specific mention of the lower Atrek area in its territorial provisions. It did provide, however, that the two countries would have equal rights in the use of the waters of the Atrek and other frontier rivers. A convention providing for the use of frontier waters and rivers was signed by Iran and the Soviet Union on 20 February 1926. Among other provisions the convention stated that the waters of the Atrek River should be used in equal amounts by the two countries, but no mention was made of the location of the boundary.¹

In the period between the two World Wars the boundary remained along the line of the Musa Khan, although a few encroachments were made from the Soviet side. As the shore line of Gasan-Kuli Bay continued to recede, the

1. Soviet Treaty Series, Vol. 1, Article XVI, p. 315.

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question undoubtedly arose as to the apportionment of the new land between the two countries. Judging from the cartographic evidence, the Soviets made certain small adjustments in the boundary in order to settle the question in their own favor. The 1938 edition of the Kizyl-Atrek (J-40-X) sheet of the Red Army 1:200,000 map series represents the boundary as ending near the northern end of the bay, at approximately latitude $37^{\circ}26'N$ -longitude $54^{\circ}02'E$. The 1942 edition of the same sheet does not show Gasan-Kuli Bay. The boundary on this sheet turns westward at about longitude $54^{\circ}05'E$ -latitude $37^{\circ}23'15"N$, extending thence to the Caspian in a slightly curved line, as shown on map CIA 11674. The Soviets had thus taken a bite off the northern extension of Iranian territory near the Caspian.

A comparison of the two editions of this sheet also reveals a minor change in the boundary in favor of the Soviet Union south of the nomad camp Chalayuk. This change is so small that it may or may not be a cartographic inadvertence. Iranians also refer to Soviet occupation in 1934 of some territory at Chetli, on the Atrek a short distance above the point where the main Atrek and the Musa Khan diverge.¹

An Iranian general made a survey of the main Atrek below Beum-Bash Lake in 1922 and claimed to have found that the channel entered the sea north of Gasan-Kuli Bay.² It is doubtful if other Iranian troops or officials have been allowed to enter the disputed triangle between the Musa Khan and the main channel of the Atrek at any time since 1881. The Soviet

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forces withdrew from northern Iran following World War II to the Musa Khan line. About eight frontier guard posts were established by Soviet forces within the disputed triangle. Iranian frontier guard posts were established opposite several of the Soviet posts, and a number of skirmishes took place between the forces of the two countries in the latter part of 1948 and in 1949. In one of these, 11 Iranian soldiers were taken prisoners. Incidents took place at Senger Tepe; at Tazehābād post, near the point where the boundary meets the Caspian coast; and at the Iranian guard post of Naft-i-Ja, which is located just south of the southernmost point of the boundary. The last should not be confused with Naft-i-Ja Hill, which is some 5 miles south of the border.¹ In the spring of 1950 Soviet border troops still occupied the posts in the disputed triangle. Near Naft-i-Ja post Soviets were reported to have run oil tests. Although the Soviets are reported to have laid barbed wire entanglements along most of the Iranian-Soviet frontier east of the Caspian, they did not place any along the boundary south of the disputed triangle.

Since no boundary has been agreed upon by the two countries, the stationing of Soviet troops south of the main channel of the lower Atrek and the frontier incidents cannot technically be described as violations of Iranian territory unless Soviet troops advanced south of the boundary.

1. Incidents also occurred to the northeast, outside of the area in dispute. On 4 August 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Kurajin, Commissioner on the Soviet frontier, stationed at Dashburun, entered Maraveh and forced the Persian officer commanding the police to destroy the dams on the Atrek River. By this action more water was diverted to Soviet territory, with a resulting loss to the local Iranian population. See Department of State Despatch No.189, Teheran, Iran, 17 December 1945, Enclosure No. 1, page 7.

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claimed by the USSR. [REDACTED]

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descriptions and the sketch maps supplied, it appears that most of the incidents occurred along or very near the boundary claimed by the Soviet Union. At Tazehābād and along the Caspian coast, however, Soviet forces advanced considerably southwest of the boundary claimed by the USSR (see map CIA 11674). At least one of these reports was based on a sketch map supplied by an Iranian official, which places the line of the Soviet claim too far to the north, thus giving the impression that Soviet forces had advanced much farther south of their claimed line than was actually the case.¹ This mistake in location of the Soviet-claimed line or the boundary in effect in 1950, results from the use of the British Quarter-Inch Series (1:253,440). The Iranian sketch is based on this series, which is inadequate for purposes of boundary location in the disputed area.

Although it is not the purpose of this report to venture a definitive opinion regarding the merits of the respective Iranian and Soviet claims on the lower Atrek, some tentative conclusions based on the above discussion are justified.

Iranians claim that the Convention of 1881 is binding in respect to the lower Atrek because (1) the Agreement of 1885 and the demarcation protocol of 1886 which fixed the boundary along the Musa Khan were not ratified by Iran, and (2) the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921 provided that the 1881 Convention should be the definitive instrument for settling the boundary

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on the lower Atrek. If the transactions of 1885 and 1886 were repudiated by Iran, as claimed, the Convention of 1881 would appear to be the only instrument having validity. However, the claim that the Soviet Government in the Treaty of 1921 accepted the provisions of the Convention of 1881 as applicable to the lower Atrek may be open to question. The Treaty of 1921 did not state that the Soviet Government would return territory on the lower Atrek to Iran, although it did name the Firuze area to the east, which Soviet Russia undertook to return. The Soviet Union could claim that the willingness expressed in Article III of the Treaty to "recognize and accept" the boundary defined by the "Frontier Commission of 1881" was intended to cover only the area specifically named later in the same article but not the Atrek area.

There seems to be no legal basis for the present boundary across the area formerly occupied by Gasan-Kuli Bay. The Russians probably moved the boundary around to suit their own purposes. From the old shore line of the bay eastward along the old course of the Musa Khan the Russians may have advanced the boundary slightly to the south of the line defined by the 1886 protocol.

If and when it is possible to negotiate a settlement of this dispute, the definitions of the boundary in the lower Atrek region given in the Convention of 1881 and the Protocol of 1886 (regardless of which one of these documents is selected as definitive) should be replaced by an entirely new definition. Even at the time it was written, the Convention of 1881 was unsatisfactory in its provisions regarding the lower Atrek because

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of the difficulty in determining with precision of the main channel of the river. At present the 1881 and the 1886 instruments are inapplicable, since both made provision for a boundary only as far west as Gasan-Kuli Bay. An agreed boundary will have to be defined across the area of the former bay. If the boundary is related to the Musa Khan, account will have to be taken of the fact that all or most of this channel is now dry. If the boundary continues to cross the lower Atrek area, it would be well to define the boundary in terms of fixed points and straight segments between the points rather than in terms of water courses.

An understanding of the dispute on the part of US officials has been hampered by a lack of direct knowledge

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British and Iranian maps, whereas the only reasonably accurate maps are the 1942 editions of the 1:200,000 Red Army series.

The preceding discussion has been based in part upon an examination of Tsarist, Soviet, British, and Iranian maps. The most useful and relevant maps are discussed and evaluated from the point of view of boundary data in the following section.

b. Maps Showing Changes in the Lower Atrek River Area

A shift in the channel of the Atrek River in the delta area occurred prior to 1881. In point of time the best available primary source that portrays this channel shift is the Russian one-inch to 20-verst (1:84,000) Map of the Transcasian Kray published by the Military Topographic Department of the Caucasus, dated 1875 but authorized for publication 1882. One

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channel was labeled "new Atrek," and a more southerly branch "old Atrek" (see map CIA 11674, inset A). This map probably furnished the basis for information appearing on the original Sheet 2 of the British 1:1,013,760 Map of Persia, which was compiled in the Intelligence Division of the War Office in 1886 and revised in 1891 from material supplied by the Surveyor General of India. The shift in channel portrayed on the one-inch to 20-verst Map of the Transcaspian Kray is probably also the basis for labeling the southern channel the "old bed of Atrek River" on Sheet 15-G and K, Pahlevi Diz (Aq Qal 'Eh), of the British Geographical Section, General Staff, 1:253,440 (Quarter-Inch) map of 1942 and all earlier editions (see map CIA 11674, inset B).

The channel labeled "new Atrek" on the one-inch to 20-verst Map of the Transcaspian Kray is shown as entering the northern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay on the following Russian maps:

(1) Sheet IX of the one-inch to 40-verst (1:680,000) series entitled, Turkestan Military Circuit, prepared by the Turkestan Military-Topographic Section in 1877 from current data.

(2) The 1:4,200,000 Map of Asiatic Russia and Adjoining Countries, compiled by the Military-Topographical Division in 1884. This map gives the northernmost channel of the Atrek as the boundary between the USSR and Persia.

(3) Sheet V of the 1:4,200,000 set entitled Map of Asiatic Russia and Adjoining Countries, which was compiled and published by the Military-Topographical Division in 1884 and reprinted in 1920. This map portrays the northernmost distributary as the main channel.

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(4) The 1:4,200,000 Map of the Basins of the Oceans, Seas, Rivers and Lakes of Asiatic Russia and the Neighbouring States, constructed by A. de Tillo, a member of the Académie Impériale des Sciences (St. Pétersbourg) and of the Académie des Sciences (Paris), published in 1905. Channels of the Atrek River were represented as entering the northern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay.

(5) Sheet XVIII, Ashkhabad', Gerat', Astrabad', and Meshkhed', 1921 edition from the 1892 printing of a map at 1:1,680,000 entitled Map of the Southern Bordering Strip of Asiatic Russia. The southern part of Gasan-Kuli is shown as completely filled in, with the boundary following the line of the old channel through the southern part of the bay. The line continues inland on a course labeled "dry bed of the Atrek," which in reality is the Musa Khan. This 1:1,680,000 map shows the main channel of the Atrek to the north of the so-called "dry bed", but within the disputed area it does not name the main channel. The importance of the 1921 edition lies in its corrections to the 1892 edition. The 1892 edition showed Gasan-Kuli Bay possessing both northern and southern parts, with the Atrek flowing into the southern part. By 1921 the southern part of the bay is represented as being filled in, leaving only the northern part as the bay. The same representation continued through the 1937 and 1938 editions of the 1:200,000 Kizyl-Atrek sheet of the General Staff Red Army series. In 1935 the northern part of the bay was 10 feet deep 4-1/2 miles away from the shore, according to the U.S. Navy translation of Piloting of the Caspian Sea (in Russian), published by the Hydrographic Division of the Main Office of the Naval Forces of the Workers and Peasants Red Army, Leningrad, 1935, p. 641.

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Possibly the information on the 1937 and 1938 maps and in the piloting directions regarding the extent and depth of Gasan-Kuli Bay was already out of date at the time it was published. The 1942 editions of the 1:200,000 Kizyl-Atrek, Gurgan, and Ashref sheets of the General Staff Red Army series, show practically all of the bay as a marshy land (see main map CIA 11674). Later map evidence from a Soviet air chart also indicates that most of the area is now land.

The only official post-1881 Russian maps available on which the Atrek River is shown as entering the southern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay are: (1) the 1:4,200,000 Map of Communications of Asiatic Russia, published by the Ministry of Communications in 1904, and (2) the previously mentioned Sheet 18, Map of the Southern Bordering Strip of Asiatic Russia, 1892 edition.

Despite the great difference in scale between this map and the Pahlevi Diz sheet of the 1:253,440 series of the British Geographical Section, General Staff, there is a marked resemblance in the representation of the boundary on the Atrek River Delta. On the GSGS sheet the boundary follows the old channel of the southern part of Gasan-Kuli Bay and proceeds inland, in part along the Musa Khan.

The most detailed maps, and the latest primary source compilations covering the delta of the Atrek River, are the 1942 edition of the Kizyl-Atrek, Gurgan, and Ashref sheets of the General Staff Red Army series at 1:200,000. These sheets form the basis for map CIA 11674. All three of the Russian sheets were compiled and published in 1942. The Kizyl-Atrek sheet is based on reconnaissance of 1941 and a 1935 map at 1:100,000; the Gurgan and Ashref sheets are based on 1941 reconnaissance.

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On the Kizyl-Atrek sheet the name "R. Atrek" is reserved for the main channel of the Atrek River. The same policy has been followed consistently on other Soviet maps. Surrounding the Atrek are many water courses, among which is the sukhoje ruslo Atrek (dry river bed Atrek), which forms the boundary. The main natural channel of the Atrek flows through a long narrow swamp north of the sukhoje ruslo Atrek.

Recently, in the course of discussion of the lower Atrek River boundary, the Iranians presented in detail their version of the situation on a 1:84,000 map of the disputed area.¹ This is the first Iranian map seen in Washington that shows the modern shore line of Gasan-Kuli Bay. The scale is one reported to have been used by the Russians but not hitherto used by the Iranians for the Lower Atrek area. The map indicated reliance on Russian sources by the Iranians, as well as a considerable advance in their cartographic knowledge of the area. However, some of the hydrography shown still seems to be out of date. The map is important because of the specific textual detail printed on it, which sheds light on some of the more technical aspects of the dispute. Information on the map, when correlated with the boundary shown on the 1:200,000 Red Army sheets for the area and with other evidence, supports the Iranian contention of a Soviet advance from the vicinity of Naft-1-Ja Post northwestward to the Caspian Sea (see map CIA 11674).

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2. Firuze' and Areas to the East

The outstanding areas of potential boundary dispute, as distinguished from areas of actual dispute, are located around Firuze' and in the area stretching east and southeast to the Harī Rūd. These are the areas shown on map CIA 11657 as lying between the "International Boundary" and the "approximate boundary defined by convention in 1881."

The 1881 boundary created a salient of Iranian territory extending northward along both banks of the stream Firuzanin Su, including the village of Firuze'.¹ The segment of the boundary somewhat to the east of Firuze' is defined as follows in the Convention of 1881:

...the frontier-line crosses over to the northernmost summit of the Aselm range, passing along its ridge in a south-easterly direction, and then skirting round to the north of the village of Keltechinar /Kālāteh Chenār/, it runs to the point where the Ziri Kou and Kizil Dagh Mountains join, extending thence south-eastward along the summits of the Ziri Kuh range, until it issues into the valley of the Baba Durmaz stream. It then takes a northerly direction, and reaches the oasis at the road from Gavers to Lutfabad, leaving the fortress of Baba Durmaz to the east.²

By the terms of the Convention of 27 May/8 June 1893 the Firuze area was ceded to Russia. The 1893 Convention stated that Iran would cede to Russia "the village of Firuze' and the entire district between the frontier

1. Russian ideas on the alignment of the boundary in 1881 are shown on the Copy of Map Furnished by Russian Minister in Tehran to Persian Government for Negotiation of Akhal-Khorassan Boundary Question, December 1881, at the scale of 1:1,260,000. This map appears in Treaties &c concluded between Great Britain and Persia, and between Persia and Other Foreign Powers, wholly or partially in force on the 1st April 1891, London, 1891, to face page 136.

2. British and Foreign State Papers, 1881-1882, Vol. LXXIII, p. 98.

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line established in 1881 and the line extending from the Kenare Mountains to the summit of the Bir Range."¹ In return for this, Russia was pledged to cede to Iran the Abbāsābād district west of the Caspian and the village of Hisār Qal'eh (Hissar) at the foot of the Kopet Dag near Lutfābād.

Data on these exchanges of territory are incomplete, and their subsequent history is rather obscure. The boundary protocols signed in 1894, which are not available in Washington, may have dealt in part with the Firuze' and Kalāteh Chenār areas. Detailed Russian and British maps indicate that boundary markers were erected along portions of the boundary in these areas some time before 1897. The Firuze' area ceded by Iran can be determined fairly accurately by consulting the maps.

In the case of the area to the east and west of Kalāteh Chenār, on the other hand, it is difficult to attempt to trace the boundary as described in the 1881 convention on currently available maps, and it is even more difficult to equate the vague wording of the 1893 convention with the boundary now in effect. The 1881 line shown on the accompanying map (CIA 11657) appears to be a reasonable interpretation of the convention of that year. If the interpretation is correct, it is evident that between 1881 and 1893 or 1894 Russia secured territory adjacent to Kalāteh Chenār, in addition to the area around Firuze'. Hisār Qal'eh was included in Iran as provided in the 1893 Convention.

1. British and Foreign State Papers, 1893-1894, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 1246.

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road from Gavers to Lutfābād, leaving the fortress of Baba Durmaz to the east. The first paragraph of Article V of the 1893 Convention purported to define the boundary eastward from this point, and the second paragraph states:

From Bada Durmaz the frontier line follows the crest of the Ziriku [Zarin Kuh] Range south-eastwards towards the village of Khairabad, but before reaching the latter it runs along the left side of the Duranghiar [Huriz] Valley.¹

There are three features bearing the name "Baba Durmaz," but only one corresponds to the fortress designated by that name in the 1881 Convention. The present boundary passes south of all three of the features bearing the name "Baba Durmaz." No provisions were made in the 1893 Convention for carrying the line from the fortress of Baba Durmaz to the crest of the Zarin Kuh. It is uncertain whether the boundary was ever actually demarcated northward from the Zarin Kuh to the Baba Durmaz area. Cartographic evidence suggests it was not demarcated.

If the Soviets had implemented the Treaty of Friendship of 1921, some of the problems described would have been eliminated. The Treaty states that the Soviet Government

...returns to Persia the village of Firouzeh [Firuze], together with the lands adjoining it, which were transferred to Russia in accordance with the Agreement of May 20, 1893.²

Firuze and the adjacent lands have, in fact, never been returned to Iran. The obligation of the Soviet Government regarding this village was explicit under the 1921 Treaty, whereas the situations regarding obligations in other boundary areas were only vaguely implied. The Soviet Government

1. British and Foreign State Papers, 1893-1894, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 1247-1248.
2. Soviet Treaty Series, Vol. 1, p. 93.

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has ignored both the clearly stated promise to return Firuze to Iran and the more general promise to recognize and accept the frontier according to the decisions of the "Frontier Commission of 1881."

No specific mention was made in the Treaty of 1921 of the area east and west of Kalāteh Chenār or the Baba Durmaz area. Nevertheless, in view of the ambiguities of the 1881 and 1893 conventions regarding these areas, the Iranians might claim them under the general promise contained in Article III of the Treaty of 1921 to "recognize and accept" the boundary of 1881.

Iranians apparently do not take the potential boundary disputes in the Kopet Dag area as seriously as they do the active dispute over the lower Atrek. With the exception of Sheet 22 K of the 1:253,440 series of the Iranian Army Geographical Division, on which part of the boundary is missing, the most authoritative Iranian maps show only the present international boundary in the Kopet Dag area, whereas Iranian maps are generally very careful to show the Iranian version of the boundary along the lower Atrek. The fact that Iranian maps do not show the largest possible Iranian claims at Firuze and in areas to the east is in part a result of Iranian use of Russian map sources for boundary data. In view of the facts that the Soviets have not ceded any of this territory to Iran and that the Iranian maps are based on Soviet sources, it is not surprising that possible claims in the Kopet Dag area have not been pressed.

The extreme eastern end of the USSR-Iran boundary might also be subject to dispute. Within the past year, Soviet guards are reported to have

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encroached on Iranian territory along the sector of the boundary that follows the Harī Rūd (Tedzhen River).¹ The Harī Rūd is said to have shifted westward gradually over a period of many years, and the Soviet border posts on the east bank of the river are reported to have moved westward correspondingly. The location and extent of these changes is not known.

In this area the Convention of 1893 defined the boundary as

...extending eastwards to the bed of the River Tedjen /Tedzhen/, which it joins somewhat to the south of the ruins of the Fortress Koushut Kale. From this point the bed of the River Tedjen will serve as a boundary-line to the beginning of the Afghan possessing at Zulfagar.²

There is no record in available sources of any supplementary agreement to provide for the location of the boundary in case of Harī Rūd should change its course. If this point has not been decided between the two parties, the Soviet Union would appear to have as much justification for moving its frontier posts to conform with the shifting river as Iran would for claiming that its territory had been encroached upon.³

1. SO 41889.

2. British and Foreign State Papers, 1893-1894, Vol. LXXXVI, p. 1248.

3. The relative merits of the two cases would depend in part upon the manner in which the stream had changed course. Generally speaking, if a boundary river suddenly abandons its old course and creates an entirely new one, the boundary remains along the old channel; whereas, if the stream changes course by gradual erosion of one bank and deposition on the other, the boundary changes with the river. There have been exceptions to this, however. (See Vittorio Adami, National Frontiers in Relation to International Law, London, 1927, pp. 22-27).

Despite the merits of claims for either position, it should be recalled that, in the case of the Amur Island incidents with Japan in the spring and summer of 1937, the Soviets claimed that a change in the Amur River course did not change the frontier.

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In the locality where the boundary meets the Harī Rūd, there is a possibility of confusion regarding the location of the boundary. A number of dry or intermittent channels spread out fanwise from either side of the Harī Rūd. The boundary extends from the west to a point within about 3 miles of the Harī Rūd, then turns southeastwards and runs along or roughly parallel to one of the intermittent channels to the point of junction with the river. The old fortress of Koushut Kale, referred to in the Convention of 1893, is located on the eastern bank of the Harī Rūd almost due east of the point where the boundary turns southeast. The Sarakhs sheet of the British Quarter-Inch series indicates that the boundary in this sector has been demarcated and shows the locations of the markers. This appears to be the true alignment of the boundary, and it is so represented on most Russian and Iranian maps. The Sarakhs sheet of the Iranian Army General Staff map at 1:1,000,000, however, shows the boundary as continuing straight east to the river at a point exactly opposite Koushut Kale. This is probably an error. Farther south is the Iranian town of Sarakhs, located a little to the west of the Harī Rūd. The Soviet town of the same name is located some distance east of the river on one of the intermittent tributary channels. The Treaty of 1921 confirmed Soviet possession of "the town of Sarakha, known as Russian Sarakhs or Old Sarakhs."

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V. RELEVANT MAP COVERAGE OF THE BOUNDARY¹

In the previous sections of this report, maps have been discussed and evaluated only insofar as they were essential to an understanding of boundary disputes and violations. Section V is a discussion of all relevant map coverage available, with emphasis on significant aspects of boundary representation.

A. USSR Compilations

In general, the best topographic maps of the boundary area are the 1942 editions of sheets of the 1:200,000 General Staff Red Army series for northern Iran, both east and west of the Caspian Sea. These sheets also give the best representation of the present boundary between Iran and the USSR. The 1942 editions were compiled from previous editions and from reconnaissance surveys undertaken by the government of the USSR during its occupation of northern Iran early in World War II. The detail presented surpasses that on any previous compilation, but field checks would be necessary to determine the accuracy of the maps. The sheets were used as the basis for CIA 11676. One item has been ignored by the Soviets in their current protests against mapping of areas in Iran adjacent to the USSR frontier by non-Iranian nationals -- the Soviets themselves have mapped in depth most of the frontier areas within northern Iran. For this area the 1942 edition of the 1:200,000 series is the most recent and most authoritative

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map available. The old Survey of India 1:253,440 series was used extensively as a compilation source for pre-1942 1:200,000 Red Army editions; exceptional sheets, however, used only Russian sources and not the Survey of India. The Astara sheet of the 1941 edition uses as one of its compilation sources the 1923 edition of the Ardebil sheet of the 1:253,440, Survey of India series. On the other hand, the Kizyl-Atrek sheet of the 1937 and 1938 Soviet series bears little resemblance to any series published by the Survey of India or British Geographical Section, General Staff.

In the past, sheets of the 1:210,000, or 5-verst Russian series have been used extensively for boundary data. They show the Russian version of the boundary in the lower Atrek River area, at Firuze', and in the areas farther east. The information presented on the topography and transportation in immediate boundary areas is now out of date.

The available sheets of the 1938-41 edition of the 1:100,000 General'nyy Shtab Rabotche Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya (General Staff Red Army of Workers and Peasants) series that cover the boundary on the Moghan Steppe and Reshteh-E-Tālesh show the land on the Soviet side of the border in fair detail. Sheet J-39-13 of the 1938 edition, however, is incorrect for the boundary northwest of Belyasuvar, and the 1939 edition of the Astara sheet incorporates Shandan within the USSR.

B. British Compilations

The 1:253,440 Survey of India (Quarter-Inch) series and reprints thereof by the British Geographical Section, General Staff, cite the Russian 5-verst map (1:210,000) as the source for boundary information, including the location

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of boundary markers. Boundary data and the location of markers on the British 1:253,440 sheets and on the 1942 edition of the 1:200,000 General Staff Red Army series agree in general. In the case of the lower Atrek, however, the boundary is overly generalized on the British sheets. A number of sheets of the British 1:253,440 series for the area west of the Caspian Sea have been revised, using the 1942 Red Army editions, but no change has been made in the position of the boundary. British sheets published before 1942 are topographically inferior to the 1942 Soviet editions for corresponding areas. The British sheets that have been revised entirely or in part since the beginning of 1943 are topographically superior to the earlier British editions.

C. Iranian Compilations

Iran is an outstanding example of a nation that has depended upon foreign sources for the cartographic representations of its frontiers. With but few exceptions the Iranians reproduced British maps of the boundary, which in turn used boundary data given on official Russian maps. Thus Iran has generally depended directly or indirectly on Russian sources for maps showing the position of the common frontier. In the case of the disputed area on the lower Atrek, however, Iranian maps consistently show the Iranian claim. The Iranian claim is generally shown on the outdated 1:253,440 Pahlewidiz sheet. Recently, however, the Iranian claim has been depicted on a 1:84,000 map, the attributes of which were discussed in a preceding section of this study.

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Any Iranian maps covering the boundary area must be closely examined to determine accuracy. If the frontier on an Iranian map of a disputed area agrees with that on a Russian map, it is often merely the result of copying and does not necessarily mean that the Iranians accede to the Soviet claims.

Four Iranian series contain sheets covering the boundary have been chosen for discussion. These include (1) a 1:50,000 series published by the Iranian Army Geographical Division, (2) a 1:253,440 series published by the same authority, (3) a 1:1,000,000 series by the same authority, and (4) a 1:1,000,000 series by General Hajeb Ali Razmara, formerly chief of the Geographical Section of the Iranian General Staff and currently Prime Minister of Iran.

The 1:50,000 series for the frontier area west of the Caspian Sea is not recommended for purposes of boundary location because (1) the division of the islands in the Aras River does not generally agree with official demarcation, and (2) no boundary is shown on the Moghan Steppe between Tazakend and Belyasuvar, the area of the most continuous Soviet encroachment across a demarcated section of the boundary.

The Iranian 1:253,440 series is based on the British Survey of India and Geographical Section, General Staff, series at 1:253,440. In some cases, however, the Iranian series differs from these sources. Sheet 8A, Moghan, does not show a boundary on the Moghan Steppe between Tazakend and Belyasuvar. Sheet 15 K, Pahlewidiz, presents the Iranian boundary claim in the lower Atrek River area, which is reproduced on inset B of map CIA 11676. All 1:253,440 maps of the lower Atrek area, whether British

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or Iranian, are out of date. The best source to use for hydrography and USSR-Iran boundary claims is the 1942 edition of the General Staff of the Red Army map, which forms the basis of the accompanying map CIA 11676. The extent to which the British and Iranian sheets are out of date is indicated by a comparison of inset B of CIA 11676 with the main map. Sheet 22 K, Ashqabad (Guchan), of the Iranian 1:253,440 series differs from Survey of India and British GSGS maps in not showing a boundary west of the Ashkhabad-Quchan road; the village of Firuze, Claim by Iran, lies in this boundary area.

The 1:1,000,000 series published by the Iranian Army Geographical Division is not recommended for use as far as boundary data are concerned. On Tabriz, Sheet No. 1, the USSR is incorrectly assigned the neck of land between the Ninji Kara Su and the Aras River in the extreme northwest near the junction of the Iran, Turkey, and USSR boundaries. Sarakhs, Sheet No. 17, represents the Iranian-Soviet boundary as extending eastward to the main stream of the Harf Rud. No basis for this alignment is known. The alignment of the boundary on the same sheet does not conform with the accepted line in the Sarakhs area as shown on Sheet 28 of the 1:1,000,000 series published by General Razmara or on any other maps, including CIA 11657. In view of conflicting reports on USSR action in the Sarakhs area, the error on Sheet 17 is important, since Iranians using this sheet might incorrectly interpret Soviet presence in the area as encroachment.

The 1:1,000,000 series by General Razmara, like Sheet 1 of the 1:1,000,000 series of the Iranian Army Geographical Division, incorrectly assigns to the

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the USSR the neck of land between the Ninji Kara Su and the Aras River. In the Sarakhs area the position of the boundary is correct. The Iranian version of the line is given for the lower Atrek River area.

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